

How Col. Amoss Works

Global Private Eye Dwells
In Constant Air of Mystery

By Edward T. Folliard

Post Reporter

(Second in a Series)

Members of the International Services of Information Foundation, a private intelligence service headed by Col. Ulius L. Amoss of Gibson Island, Md., get exciting reading for the \$25 which they contribute annually.

A letter from Amoss to ISI members, dated last June 17, begins:

"GEORGI MALENKOV IS DEAD"

This was news, a real scoop.

But in the next sentence, Amoss hastens to add, "This is a rumor from ISI sources—repeat, this is a rumor. It is not a fact."

Even though there are occasional letdowns, Amoss' reports keep the adventurous spirit running high. Sometimes, people who receive ISI material must fear for a time that the colonel is a goner. Very often, however, it turns out that he wasn't in any danger after all, and is safe, sound and ready for further excitement.

Message Produced Thrill

On July 5, under a dateline reading "By courier from Munich," Colonel Amoss gave his ISI subscribers a thrill with this message:

"I am a virtual prisoner in a Munich hotel. I am not sure that the care 'they' take of me is due to consideration for my safety—or theirs. 'They' even post guards. 'They' won't permit me to go out without protection—and never at night. But when I went to parts I shouldn't mention, they relaxed their guard, apparently considering a danger zone safe enough. It was!

"Last night I returned without having experienced any excitement. But, once in my room, a series of 'shots' startled me; through my window, red flame glowed briefly. I am ashamed to say that I shouted to my friend and personal security officer, 'Keep away from that window!' I am ashamed, because we discovered that the 'shot' were firecracker explosions, set off by German children in honor of our Fourth of July."

After this let-down, Colonel Amoss hurried on in his ISI letter to tell about his meeting with some mysterious members of an "elite underground system."

He also had something to say about his meetings with mystery men in a room at Gibson Island.

Island Houses GHQ

An 11-room rented house on the island, located on Chesapeake Bay about 23 miles southwest of Annapolis, is the general headquarters of Colonel Amoss' ISI network, although the business office is at 219 W. Monument st., Baltimore.

He is a year-round resident of the island, along with his vivacious English-born wife, the former Veronica Grogan. They met in Cairo during World War II when both were in intelligence work, he for Gen. William J. (Wild Bill) Donovan's Office of Strategic Services and she for the British.

A visitor calling on Col. Amoss on Gibson Island, as all visitors to the privately-owned island, must first be cleared at the gate. Up the road a way is the colonel's house. Guests are taken to his office, just off the living room. It has an impressive atmosphere, suggesting that its occupant has been around.

The walls are covered with autographed pictures. One bears the inscription, "For my friend, Ulius Amoss, Franklin D. Roosevelt." (FDR autographed it when he was Governor of New York). There is a photograph of Col. Amoss and Roy S. Vandenberg, member of the time when Col. Amoss served under him as

deputy chief of staff of the United States Ninth Air Force. One reads: "To Pete (Amoss' nickname) with sincere thanks for his loyal support and excellent counsel, Hoyt S. Vandenberg."

Books Indicate Interest

On the bookshelves are volumes that bespeak Col. Amoss' deep interest in espionage: Rebecca West's "The Meaning of Treason," "Stalin by Trotsky," "The Russian Menace to Europe," "The Pattern for World Revolution," "No Secret is Safe," and "Handbook for Spies."

According to a sketch in the International Who's Who, Amoss was born in St. Louis 58 years ago last July 28. He was a student at the Maryland Institute of Fine Arts in Baltimore. He was a press agent for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in 1918-16, and after that was sales manager for a Baltimore firm.

In World War I, he was a YMCA secretary with the 79th Division. He was also a YMCA secretary in Greece during a part of the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-21. Thereafter, in 1920-24, he was adviser to the Greek General Staff, a job that seems to have laid the groundwork for his later career as an intelligence man.

Returning to this country from Greece, Amoss was an exporter in New York. He also served with firms like the Condossis Tobacco Co., and the Gramtrade International Corporation.

Served With OSS
He won his rank in World War II, serving with the Air Force and OSS, and is now in the Air Force Reserve.

How did he come to set up his intelligence network?

Well, he explained, he had long felt that the trouble with secret intelligence was that it was too secret. Also, he had made this discovery: that by the time the raw material was processed—correlated with other intelligence, appraised and edited—it often was no longer intelligence but history.

Moreover, Col. Amoss said, he concluded that the American people as a whole were getting no benefit from our official intelligence, except when it was decided to leak something to them so as to formulate public opinion.

Once Col. Amoss gets going about his agents, his annual trips to Europe and the flow of intelligence reports to Gibson Island, things begin to flow. He says he has been in the business of espionage.

Take, for example, his trip to Europe last summer. He said that he went behind the Iron Curtain and that it was "a simple operation." But his most exciting adventure took place, not in Communist territory, but on this side of the Curtain—in Duesseldorf, Germany.

Someone Shoots at Him

One night he was on his way to the airport to fly to London, he said, when he realized he was being trailed by somebody in another car. A shot came from the pursuer. Then the car drew alongside and there was another shot.

"I got out of the cab," Col. Amoss said, "caught another one and went to the railroad station. There I got a third cab and drove to the airport."

"When I calmed down, I concluded that the shooting was just a demonstration, something to impress me, not an attempt to kill me. Neither shot hit the cab."

He said that just before this he had been talking to a group of men in West Germany. They described themselves as dissidents from the Red Army, but he suspected them of being Soviet agents. He believed that they were responsible for the shots. It was all, he said, an example of "the devious workings of the Slavic mind."

Curiously enough, either Amoss got his cities in Germany mixed up (something an intelligence agent should do only rarely, if at all), or else exactly the same thing happened to him in Munich. For in a piece in The American Weekly on November 8, Amoss describes the identical incident of shots, transfers from one cab to another, etc., but as happening in Munich, not Duesseldorf, just after an abortive effort to kidnap Vasily Stalin.

Letter from Duesseldorf

Col. Amoss showed the reporter a letter he sent to ISI members last summer. The dateline was Duesseldorf; the date July 21.

"Beria," he had written, "has not been arrested. He is in hiding. This is the belief of an always reliable ISI source. This is the conviction of another ISI source, not always reliable."

Col. Amoss, bringing the reporter up to date, was much more positive—much more emphatic. Right now, he said, Beria definitely is out of Russia. He said he had heard of a few weeks ago.

He then went on to tell of an adventure that befell him in Munich last summer, saying:

"A man came to me. He represented himself as a major in the Russian Security Police. He said he was representing Beria, and presented a card signed with Beria's name. He said he had been authorized to ask me whether Beria, if he escaped would get sanctuary anywhere in the West.

"I said I couldn't give him an official answer. But I said that if Beria was willing to give information, unquestionably he would get sanctuary.

Major Was 'Satisfied'

"The major said, 'Well, I'm satisfied,' and left."

Colonel Amoss said he could state as "a fact" that Beria sent five of his most trusted lieutenants out of the country when he got worried about his own life.

"They had instructions," he said, "that if anything happened to him (Beria) they were to turn papers over to Western agents.

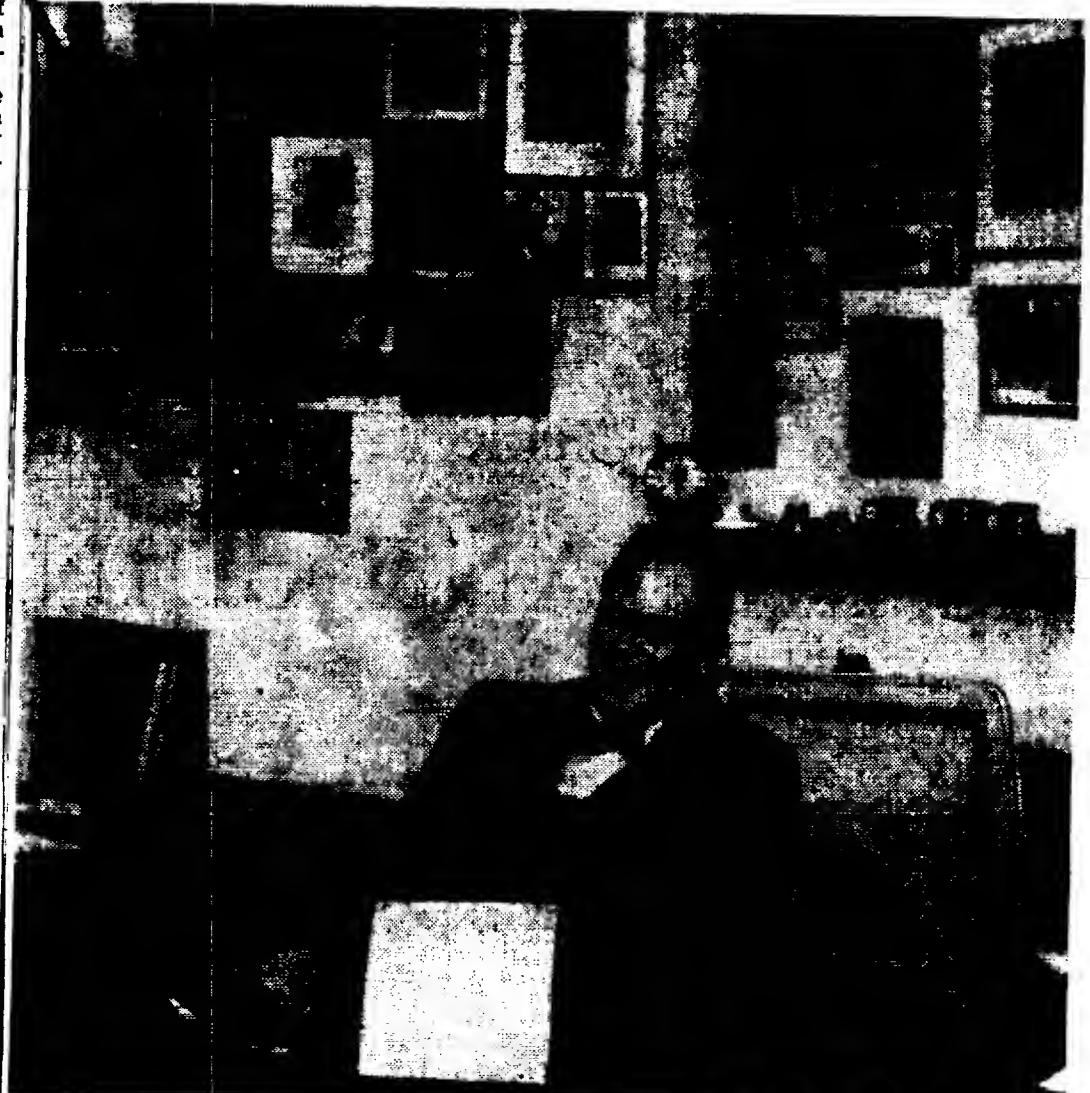
"Beria himself faded. He went to the mountains of Transcaucasia, of which his native Georgia is a part. It was then that the Kremlin denounced him. He eventually got out of Transcaucasia.

"Now evidently he was still in the mountains when this major called on me in Munich. At least, I believe he was. Since Beria got out, additional facts have been learned.

"They have taken a dummy Beria from Tiflis, capital of Georgia, and he has been trained and secretly sent to Moscow. He is being held in a prison operated by the Defense Department, not the MVD. The trial material for this dummy Beria has been completed, and orders have been issued to send him back to Georgia to stand trial. I say they have been issued; whether they have actually been sent, I don't know.

Comic Feature Related

"There is a comic feature to all this. Beria has learned about the scheme. He doesn't like it. That is why he sent



By Harry Goodwin—The Washington Post

Colonel Ullus L. Amoss, head of a private intelligence network, relaxes at his Gibson

Island, Md., home. The photos are mostly of military men with whom Amoss served.

the major to see me. If they go through with the farcical trial, he will tell his lieutenants to turn over the papers to Western agents.

"I am waiting now on instructions as to whether I am to go over and get them or not."

He said the Beria papers "allegedly" contained information about Russia's atomic energy program.

If it turns out that Beria really has escaped—and especially if he unmasks himself somewhere in the West—Amoss will be a hero. If, on the other hand, the Russians announce that they have executed Beria, Amoss will be able to point out that long ago he predicted that a "dummy" would be put on trial and executed.

TOMORROW: Lieutenant Jarecki and his MIG-15.